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business sense he had now accumulated a considerable amount of property. At Mr. Li's invitation, we went with him to Wen-hua market. This trading center was built only a few years ago, and now it had two streets and several ten's of thatched houses. The traders mostly were natives of the three districts of Wan-ning, Ling-shui, and Lo-hui. The place appeared deserted. In the middle of the trading center was an elementary school, but as it was now winter vacation, we did not have a chance to inspect it.

Just then a Miao arrived at the trading center, bringing rice for barter. We bartered two package of tobacco, a tin tablespoon, and some needles for three sheng of rice (24 liang in a pint). Actually, when we began our reckoning, the value of his goods was greater than that of ours, but he was completely satisfied /129/ for he apparently thought that he had gotten a good bargain. This also brings to light the condition of disparity in value, under which the bartering trade has been carried on between Chinese merchants and the Li and the Miao people.

At ten o'clock that evening, just as we were ready to go to bed, we suddenly heard the sound of gongs and drums approaching. On inquiring of the workmen of the Wang family, we learned that in the neighboring village the family of a sick man was putting on a t'iao niang /"leaping women"/ service. This was something we did not want to miss, so we went in the dark to watch it. We did not know how far away it was, and all we could do was to go in the direction from which the sound of gongs and drums was coming. On the way we woke up the dogs in the village, and the sounds of barking began everywhere. When we reached the gates of the village, we saw under the moonlight a cordon of leaves at the entrance, which, according to Li custom, is a sign forbidding outsiders from entering the village. But since we had come such a long distance, we pretended not to see it and went ahead. When we reached the sick man's home, the t'iao niang had just begun. The three or four niang p'o /"old women"/ were all males. In the house hung five bronze gongs and a large drum, and with the disorderly striking of the former and thumping of the latter, a great confusion of noise was created. The

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184 Lajonquière (2) writes: "The wedding ceremonies seem to differ
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2. II. p. 315.

somewhat in the details, but, taken as a whole, they are limited to the following: If a young man has his eye on a young girl, he informs his parents. His father selects two venerable men from his family to take gifts to the house of the girl. Among some Meau, these gifts consist of a small pig and alcohol; among others they are simply incense candles, which the go-betweens, as soon as they have arrived at the door, stick in the ground and light. In both cases, the father of the girl steps outside the door and /102/ invites the emissaries to partake of food and drink. If he has the food served to them outside the house, it means that the proposal is rejected. If he asks them to step inside, the invitation itself means that it has been accepted and that the marriage formalities can be discussed immediately."

[114] These statements were borrowed almost verbatim by Abadie (1).

1. Page 165.

184 Lajonquière (2) then continues very explicitly: "A great
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2. II. p. 316.

feast, or rather a series of feasts which last two days, is prepared. Two days of joy, during which all the friends and relatives, called together from afar, bring gifts to the bridegroom, which enable him to supplement the very substantial bridal gift which he has to give to the parents of his future wife.

[583] This bridal gift sometimes is made up of 100 silver piasters, 100 kilograms of whiskey, a pig weighing one hundred kilograms, chickens, and so forth.

"When the day finally arrives, the young man, accompanied by his friends (there must be at least six men and two women), offers his gifts. The procession is gay on its journey and is led by mouth-organ players. A festive meal awaits them in the bride's house.

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166 If the path forks, the head carefully puts branches over the
484 path, by means of which those following can see the direction in
which they must continue.

• [201] In general, if there is no compelling reason such as war,
[361] epidemics, crop failure as a result of rice diseases, and the like,
[731] a migration is never farther than a half of at most a full day's
march from the old village.

/261/ During the migration one always tries to reach the
desired goal by the shortest route. Winding paths are taken
only if there are pack animals, and then only as many as are
absolutely necessary in order to prevent a breakdown of the ani-
mals. Otherwise, it goes straight uphill and then continues
along the crest line; upon reaching the end, it goes straight down
again, across the valley and usually through a brook, and then
again climbs up the next mountain ridge. -- This kind of migra-
[171] tion differs fundamentally from that of the Thai peoples, who
always, as far as is in any way possible, follow the brook beds
in the valleys and, when that is no longer feasible, cross the
mountain by the shortest route, in order to reach the brook bed
again on the other side. The manner in which the Meau travel
reminds one very much of that of the Lapps and makes European
[481] ideas seem positively ridiculous. They walk very fast and rest
[312] often. In no time a water pipe is carved out of bamboo and
makes the rounds, or a stub pipe of wood is lighted (see the
chapter "Food and Stimulants"). Water is drunk from every little
brook that is reached. Nevertheless they rapidly push onward.

During the migration the intimate association with the
natural surrounding is clearly evident. They are constantly look-
[283] ing for useful objects. Whether it be lianas whose fibers will
[285] later be twisted into ropes, or those that, cut into strips, will
later serve as plaiting material, in no time they are lopped off,
rolled up, and fastened to the packsaddle. A squirrel is killed
with a well-aimed shot of the crossbow and stowed away in the
[224] pack bag; perhaps even a muntjac is bagged. The latter rarely
happens, however, for, although otherwise they stalk game as
soundlessly as wildcats while hunting, on a migration it is as
though all the evil spirits were let loose. The shouting, hooting,